



## A CLEW BY WIRE

OR AN INTERRUPTED CURRENT

BY

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## SYNOPSIS

CHAPTER I—Nelson Conway, suspected of a Philadelphia bank robbery, reaches his home in a Philadelphia suburb, where he is met by his wife, Sarah, and his young son, Billy. He is in a state of great excitement and confusion.

CHAPTER II—A year previous Conway, being in a Philadelphia suburb, was in a state of great excitement and confusion. He was in a state of great excitement and confusion. He was in a state of great excitement and confusion.

CHAPTER III—Conway is accused of the robbery. He is in a state of great excitement and confusion. He is in a state of great excitement and confusion. He is in a state of great excitement and confusion.

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quivering glance at me.

"Oh, yes, I hope to have absolute rest and peace, at any rate," I replied, somewhat hesitatingly, for my journey at the old house had certainly not begun restfully. I had slept but little the night before.

"Nothing about the arrangements I have made for your comfort to prevent it, is there?" he asked.

"No. You have done well. I want to ask you, before I forget it, why did you have the cellar off of the old store-room walled up?"

A look of perplexity came over his face, and, as he did not seem to comprehend my question, I went on more explicitly:

"There were two doorways, one leading to the storeroom and the other leading to the outside. Both these doorways have been built up with solid masonry to correspond with the foundation walls. I simply ask out of curiosity what your reasons were for having it done—not that I have any objection."

My question was a simple enough one. Mr. Sonntag seemed to think it necessary to ponder over it, however.

"Let me see. The cellar you have reference to is directly under the room you proposed in your letter of instruction to me to occupy," he finally said.

"Yes, and there used to be two doors to it."

"And they have been built up?" he broke in.

"Yes. Do you not know about it?" I asked, in surprise.

"No," he replied, shortly.

"Then you did not have it done?"

"Certainly not. I had nothing to do with it. Know nothing about it," he answered, decidedly. "If they are built up, it has been done within six weeks. For when I received your letter announcing your intention to occupy the house for a time, I went all through the place, and those doorways were not built up then. I even went into that cellar. It was a damp, musty hole, and I intended to call your attention to it and ask what you wished done about it."

"Well, that's strange! Who could have done it?" I exclaimed, thoroughly perplexed. "How did you get into the storeroom? I had to kick open the door."

"Oh, I had a key to the outside door, and got in that way. H'm! It is, as you say, very strange, indeed. But resume your seat, Mr. Conway."

Again the thought occurred to me that I had met Mr. Sonntag, or at least seen him, somewhere before.

"Did I ever meet you?" I asked, voicing my thought.

He glanced quickly at me, and then smiled as he said: "Look like some one you know, do you? One often meets people who put them in mind of some one else. Now, regarding this cellar affair. Is there anyone you know who is interested in your property?" he asked, in a brisk, business-like manner.

"No one," I replied. "I am the last of my race—a lonely man, and one who is sick at heart, I was about to add."

Mr. Sonntag's face became serious, and I thought there was a touch of pity on it.

"Cheer up, Mr. Conway. The tables will turn some day, and you will forget the time of trouble and despondency," the old lawyer said, cheerily and hopefully; "perhaps sooner than you have any idea of. Now, then, he continued, returning to his brisk, business-like manner, "some one has walled up those doorways. Who was it, and for what purpose? If it was done with the idea of a hiding-place, what was the thing to be hidden? Something which was never again to be reproduced, evidently, or the room would not have been wholly sealed. Perhaps there was a secret entrance provided. But then, why should your property have been selected? Were you alone when the discovery was made?"

"No, Mr. A woman who used to act as nurse girl when I was a young one was with me, and also Mrs. Snyder, the widow who takes care of the house."

"Yes, I know. I believe the old widow can be relied upon to say nothing about the circumstances if she is told not to. How about the other, your old nurse?"

"She would do anything possible for me. I was her idol when a child, and now devotion for me seems to have been augmented in proportion to my stature. Sarah is wholly trustworthy, and if I requested her not to mention the matter she would have her tongue out rather than breathe a word of it."

"That's good. The discovery had best be kept secret," the old lawyer said, reflectively.

"There is another thing I wish to mention, though perhaps it is hardly worth dwelling upon. Mrs. Snyder thinks there is something strange about the house. And she has so succeeded in impressing my old nurse with the idea that Sarah is quite concerned about my staying. She seems to be imbued with an inexplicable fear that something harmful threatens me."

"Indeed! What do you mean when you say there is something strange? You mean mysterious?" the old lawyer asked, in the manner he would have used in cross-examining a witness.

"Yes; Mrs. Snyder claims to have seen mysterious lights at night, and heard strange noises."

Mr. Sonntag's eyes lost their shrewd expression for a few moments; he relapsed into deep thought.

"Have these mysteries any relation to, or any connection with, the sealed cellar?" he finally asked.

"The woman said nothing about the strange events being located in any particular place, and I did not think to ask

her," I replied. The old lawyer's question opened up a new train of thought. Could it be possible that the strange voice I had heard proceeded from the sealed cellar?

"Ah! I suppose the women are superstitious and think the place is haunted. Such ideas generally get abroad about old, long vacated houses. But you do not mind their talk? You are not afraid of ghosts, are you?" The old fellow's eyes twinkled merrily.

"Well I have never come across any of those shadowy beings. I could tell better after I met one. I hardly think talk alone could frighten me," I replied, somewhat shamefacedly, remembering how nearly I had been unnerved the night before by my own reflection.

"I will be over some time to-morrow, and will see if anything can be done regarding the mysterious cellar," Mr. Sonntag said, as I rose to leave. "And—pardon me for referring to the unfortunate affair—have you heard of any new developments in the robbery case?"

"What!" I exclaimed, "you know of it too?"

"Certainly. I lived near Philadelphia at the time and I read the papers," he replied, smilingly.

"It seems I cannot escape hearing of that terrible affair," I said, bitterly. "And I acted the part of a fool, too, in the matter. Instead of putting forth every effort to find the perpetrators I let the thing go; let others, who could not possibly have had the interest in the case that I had, undertake investigations. I am rightly served for my supineness, for I have heard nothing about it at all. I know what I knew the morning of its occurrence, not a bit more. Others have failed; I intend to see now what I can do."

"You intend going into the affair, then?" he said, dryly.

"I do, with all the energy and resource I am possessed of."

"Do you know how near you came to being arrested for the crime?" Sonntag asked.

"Why, yes. I know, of course, that would have happened could anything have been found against me."

"Well, there was enough to hold you, on suspicion at least."

"Then why did you not arrest me? I am sure I was willing. I courted a trial."

"It was very seriously talked of among the trustees. But the president opposed it, for one," Sonntag said.

"Yes, I know he really believed me innocent."

"But his objection was not the strongest influence which arose in your behalf," continued my agent. "The strongest, most powerful opposition to our arrest came from one whose influence outweighs even the president's."

"One of the trustees?" I asked, eagerly.

"Yes."

"You cannot mean—"

"Sylvester Morley," interrupted the lawyer.

"Mr. Morley!" I exclaimed, joyfully. For I knew, great as Sylvester Morley's influence was, there was one who wielded a greater, since she could influence her father. Was it her sweet self that had come to my aid through her father? It would be happiness to know this; but then—why had she passed me without a greeting?

My face must have told a whole story to the shrewd old lawyer. When I turned toward him again there was a very grave expression on his face, and a contemplative look about his sharp eyes as he regarded me.

"You seem highly elated by this," he said.

"Oh, I am. What young man would not feel highly honored in knowing that a man of Mr. Morley's standing had defended him?" I exclaimed.

The old fellow saw the blush which spread over my face, however, and he smiled as he replied: "I do not court your confidence, but it is plain there is some power behind Mr. Morley which led that gentleman to defend you. Now, believe me, Mr. Conway, I do not ask for curiosity; there is a grave purpose in the question I am about to ask you," he went on, as the smile died from his face and what seemed to me to be deep concern appeared instead. "The question is this: Are you an especial friend of Miss Morley's? Are you engaged to marry her?"

"No. But, had the suspicion of the robbery not fallen upon me, I probably would have asked her to be my wife long before now," I replied, rather wondering at myself for telling this to the old fellow on so short an acquaintance.

"Ah, she loves you, then?"

"That I cannot say. I believe she did think very highly of me at one time; but I promised not to hold any communication with her until my innocence was known. It is a year since then. Whether her feeling for me has changed or not I do not know."

"You have stuck to your promise, then?"

"Why, certainly!" I answered, with some indignation at the implied doubt of me.

"Now about the investigation you desire to engage in," Sonntag said, changing the subject rather abruptly.

"What do you propose to do? How go about it?"

"Oh, hire some smart detective," I replied. "I suppose that will be the only way. What else can I do?"

"Do you think the bank officials have done nothing? Do you think you could find any shrewd detectives than have undoubtedly been working on the case? If the bank with all its tremendous resources has not succeeded in running the robbers down, how can you expect to succeed when your limited means would make your search merely a superficial one?"

"But, heavens, man! what am I to do? Carry this load to the grave? Why, Mr. Sonntag, this suspicion of me, you cannot imagine what a horrible thing it is, how it darkens my life!" I exclaimed, in bitterness of spirit, as I realized how hopeless my case seemed.

"You have been patient so long under your trouble, a little more endurance will not hurt you," Sonntag said, in answer to my despairing words.

"You'll come out of it all with flying colors some day. Now it may not look so to you, but to me it appears that you have done a great deal yourself, in the investigations which no doubt are still in progress."

"How can that be? I have done nothing."

"Oliver—Pa, what does bon-mot mean?"

"Pa—Oh, don't bother me! Get your Latin dictionary and find out for yourself—Ally Sloper."



"Ah! She loves you then."

"And that is exactly what I mean. That very course seems to me to be a great feature in the search, though you cannot see it in that light," Sonntag smiled in a knowing way.

"In what respect has my supineness aided the case?" I asked, curiously.

"By allowing the real perpetrators of the crime to feel secure in their position, knowing as they probably do that you are still the only suspected party."

I was much impressed by the old fellow's words.

"You ought to have been a detective," I remarked, at which he turned his sharp glance toward me and answered: "Yes, I might have done something in that line. But I prefer a quiet life."

Sonntag followed me out to the buggy. I took up the line, but a thought occurred to me, and I delayed my departure to voice it.

"Do you know Mr. Morley?" I asked.

"No, I do not," was Sonntag's answer.

"Then where did you get your information about that gentleman's defense of me?"

"Oh, such news gets out sometimes. Still, I don't mind telling you. It was from Horace Jackson I received the information."

"From Jackson!" I exclaimed, in surprise. "You know Jackson, then?"

"Yes; merely a speaking acquaintance, though. He comes here quite frequently."

"How can he get away from the bank?" I asked.

"He is not employed there now. Jackson has become quite wealthy, at least so he himself says. He has made some big strikes speculating in coal lands. He said he could not afford to devote his time to the bank for a paltry salary when his interests outside had grown so important. So he left about five or six months ago."

"Then he did finally fulfill his threat of leaving," I remarked. "He was always talking about leaving," I continued, in explanation. "As he still held on to his position notwithstanding, it got to be a standing joke in the office about Jackson quitting the job."

"Ah, indeed? He seemed, then, to desire that every one of his associates might expect his leaving at any time?" remarked the lawyer, with a significance I could not then account for.

"I suppose so, or he would not have reiterated his intention so frequently. And he's become rich? No wonder. He told me once he was interested with Mr. Morley in a few business ventures. Well, he's lucky. You'll be over, then, to-morrow?"

"Yes. Good-day."

## (To Be Continued.)

A Pleasant Prospect.  
Mrs. Wayupp—Rev. Dr. Orthodoxy that he believes all people in the hereafter will continue the work they began on earth."

More Than Enough.  
Judge—The jury has found you guilty of bigamy. Have you anything to say before I pass sentence upon you?"

Prisoner—Well, judge, I'll leave it to you if havin' two wives ain't punishment enough.—N. Y. Herald.

Only Possible Reason.  
"Yes," said the sweet young thing, proudly, "I've never been kissed by a man in my life."

"You ought to quit eating onions," said the old bachelor, sourly.—Chicago Tribune.

A Cruel Stab.  
"Yes, Miss Seareyellough's poodle died yesterday. It was awfully pathetic. She kissed it good-by."

"Kissed it, eh? Well—er—was that before or after the doctors had abandoned hope?"—Baltimore News.

Safely Hired.  
Were I a honey bee to-day, Mine were a pleasure deep: All winter long they'd keep away And kindly let me sleep.—Washington Star.

NOT A LINGUIST.  
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There is a statement being made in some papers to the effect that at a school gathering some time ago a boy was awarded a medal for amiability. He was not specially apt in his studies; he was not singularly studious; but

## THIS EARTH OF OURS

It Is the Most Desirable Unit of the Solar System.

As Atmospheric Conditions and Lighting Facilities Are Far Superior to Those of Any Other Planet.

EVERYBODY is interested more or less in the earth on which he lives and the planets which the discerning eye discovers in the heavens. To demonstrate their various revolutions is the pleasant task of the astronomer who, to the average individual, is a person to be envied and honored.

Prof. Schiaparelli, the famous Italian astronomer, has recently completed a protracted study of the planet Mercury and has succeeded in charting its surface. He finds that Mercury is the only planet which is heavier than the earth. Taking the density of the earth as 1, that of Mercury is 1.26. No other member of the solar system, not even the sun itself, can compare with our globe in weight.

Jupiter, the largest of all the planets, is 1,400 times as heavy. Mercury holds the two records for being heaviest, bulk for bulk, of all the planets, and of being nearest to the sun. But in all other respects the earth beats it. Mercury is only three times as large as the moon. It has little or no atmosphere, and, consequently, equally little water. Moreover, it seems fairly certain that it no longer revolves on its axis like our planet, but resembles the moon in turning one face always towards the sun. If you put down the figure 6, and add after it 21 noughts, you have the approximate weight in tons of the world we live and work in.

Venus, and not Mars, is the nearest of all the planets to ourselves. It also resembles the earth nearly in size and weight, and during its occasional transits across the sun's disk we can see its atmosphere. Mars is nearly 50,000,000 miles farther from the sun than the earth, but it is so much less hidden by clouds that we can tell more about its shape and make than about any other members of the solar system. Out of 100 square miles of our earth 72 are water and 28 are land.

MAP OF THE PLANET MERCURY.

(Made from Photographs Taken by Prof. Schiaparelli.)

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He was such a sweet-spiced fellow, he kept everybody in a wholesome humor, he was ever cheerful, he always lent a hand where it was needed—so they gave him a medal for being amiable. The incident is such a wholesome one that it is worth mentioning here with the suggestion that there are not a few of us who might well seek to imitate the lad, even if there were no medals to be given out. As one goes in and out among people, noting their temperaments, their likes and dislikes, their frankness—which is often another name for abruptness to the point of pain—there grows the longing for more amiable people. What a different world to bring some sunshine into it. There is sunshine in the way we shake hands with people, in the way we greet them as they pass on the street, in the office and store. There was a father who made an agreement with his two little boys; they were to always make sunshine, ever to be amiable. One day the little five-year-old came to his father and said: "Papa, Willie is making clouds." "And what is the other liddle making?"